November 17, 1970

Mr. Frank Rizzo
Commissioner of Police
City Hall
Philadelphia, Pa. 191

Dear Mr. Rizzo:

I have just returned from watching President Nixon as he left the Academy of Fine Arts, apparently terminating his visit to this city, and am in utter indignation over the actions of one of your officers. I feel obligated to report this incident to you and to strongly suggest you take measures to insure that the like will not happen again.

I am a student of the Univeristy of Pennsylvania. I left the university at 6:30 tonight with a group of other students, intending to view the President and make it known that I deeply and sincerely disagreed with his policies. You may question whether such group actions serve a purpose, but I assure you that I am honestly of the conviction that the President should not travel in this country without being reminded that there are those who vehemently oppose him. This is a basic right, strong-felt with me.

I did not mind that a car from the Civil Disobedience Squad rode beside my group for the entire walk to the Academy. Admittedly, however, I was quite offended when these men were joined by FBI agents who walked up and down our line filming each face in the crowd. My sense of the principles of democracy does not respond favorably to such actions.

At the demonstration outside of the academy, I was overwhelmed by the number of policemen present. Perhaps I should not complain for, being a student of other political assassinations, I am aware of the needs for great presidential protection. I saw no incidents of police harassing the crowds, nor did I see the same of students toward police. (During this time I was taking several pictures with a 35mm. camera.)

After the President and his motorcade departed and the barricades were removed from the crowds, I walked with a friend toward the front entrance of the Academy. In approaching the corner of Broad and Cherry, I took a picture of a large crowd of policemen standing on that corner.

When I reached the corner, I was physically stopped by a policeman in the crowd. He demanded that I remove the film from my camera and expose it to the light. I asked why I should do this, to which he responded that he didn't want

his picture taken. I asked if he had the legal right to demand that I expose my film. He could say only that I hadn't asked permission to take his picture, and that he didn't want it taken. I admittedly was not aware of my rights in this matter and greatly feared not obeying the officer.

In the meantime, my friend crossed to the other side of the street where two police captains were standing. He inquired as to an officer's right to demand exposure of film and was informed that no such right existed. He persuaded one of the captains to come across the street and stop the officer who had apprehended me. While my friend was gone, I tried to stall exposing the film, for the pictures I had taken were of great value to me. The officer made several indignant remarks to me during this time.

As I began to open the back of my camera to comply with the officer's request, the captain reached the other side and told me that I did not have to expose the film. He instructed the officer that he had absolutely no right to have ordered me as he did. I thanked the captain and departed. I was too excited and upset to get the name or number.

I firmly believe that I should show no disrespect to policemen unless they first show disrespect to me. I assure you in this case that I was deliberately polite for I did not want to start an incident and desperately did not want to be arrested. I feel morally that I should have vehemently protested the officer's treatment of me, although the fear of arrest inhibited me. Although I have long hair, I can honestly say that I gave the officer no justification for his behavior.

I feel that I have suffered an obvious infringement on my rights, unprompted and unjustifiable. Such acts threaten the very fiber of democracy. I was furthermore in the very precarious position of being unable to defend myself and, had my friend not been present, might have had to expose my film, suffering the physical and mental costs with no probable recourse.

I think it your duty to take every step in seeing that your officers protect the rights of Philadelphia students, and do not behave in the deplorable manner in which the officer I encountered did. I sincerely commend the captiain who aided me, but hate to think what might have happened had he not. I unfortunately can take no further action but to assure you that you cannot expect community respect for your force unless each and every officer acts in a manner worthy of respect.

Sincerely,

Howard Roffman